

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 053931

NODIS  
CHEROKEE; FOR CHARGE ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, BEPR, US, UR

SUBJECT: BREZHNEV'S LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

1. FOLLOWING IS SOVIET EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF TEXT OF  
LETTER FROM BREZHNEV TO THE PRESIDENT, DELIVERED BY  
DOBRYNIN ON 28 FEBRUARY, 1978.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: YOUR LATEST LETTER TRANSMITTED THROUGH  
THE US EMBASSY IN MOSCOW ON JANUARY 30 HAS EVOKED, I WILL  
PUT IT STRAIGHT, MIXED FEELINGS AND SOME REFLECTIONS WHICH  
I CONSIDER NECESSARY TO SHARE WITH YOU IN THE SPIRIT OF  
FRANKNESS INHERENT IN OUR CORRESPONDENCE.

AS IT FOLLOWS FROM THE LETTER, YOU SHARE OUR ASSESSMENT OF  
SECRET

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THE PREDOMINANT TREND AND MAIN DIRECTION OF SOVIET-US  
RELATIONS AT PRESENT AND FOR THE FUTURE . THIS CANNOT BUT  
CAUSE SATISFACTION. AGREEMENT ON THE BASIC APPROACH, IT  
WOULD SEEM, SHOULD FACILITATE TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT THE  
SOLUTION OF SPECIFIC ISSUES WHICH ARE ON THE AGENDA OF OUR  
RELATIONS. IN ITS TURN, AN ACTIVE ADVANCE IN THOSE ISSUES  
WOULD NOT ONLY BE A LOGICAL CONTINUATION OF ALL THE POSI-  
TIVE THINGS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN DONE THROUGH EFFORTS OF

BOTH SIDES IN RECENT YEARS, AND WOULD ALSO OPEN NEW PROS-

PECTS FOR FRUITFUL COOPERATION IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH  
OUR COUNTRIES AND THE ENTIRE WORLD.

WE GENERALLY CONSIDER THAT THE CENTRAL TASK OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF TODAY - IF WE DO NOT WANT THE WORLD TO BE AGAIN OVERFLOWED BY THE WAVE OF MUTUAL FEARS, SUSPICIONS, BY UNCURBED ARMS RACE - IS EXACTLY TO TAKE, AND WITHOUT ANY DELAY, PRACTICAL STEPS WHICH WOULD DEEPEN EMERGING RELAXATION OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION, CONSOLIDATE WHAT IS NEW IN RELATIONSHIP AMONG NATIONS, WHICH CONSTITUTES THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO RETURNING TO THE "COLD WAR."

FOR UNDERSTANDABLE REASONS THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLE HERE BELONGS TO OUR TWO COUNTRIES, TO THEIR ABILITY TO FIND MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS BASED ON THE ACCOUNT OF EACH OTHER'S LEGITIMATE INTERESTS, ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF ACTUAL REALITIES OF THE DEVELOPMENTS. THIS, OF COURSE, REQUIRES CONSTRUCTIVE POLITICAL WILL, DETERMINATION TO ACT PROCEEDING FROM BROAD INTERESTS AND LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE OF THE WORLD DEVELOPMENT, AND NOT UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SOME OR OTHER MOMENTARY FACTORS.

I SAY ALL THIS ONLY BECAUSE THE CURRENT SITUATION IN RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES PROMPTS ME TO DO SO. INDEED, ONE CANNOT FAIL TO SEE THAT IN SPECIFIC AND, FOR THAT MATTER, MAJOR PROBLEMS OF THESE RELATIONS A PROGRESS IS EITHER HARDLY NOTICEABLE OR IS NOT THERE AT ALL.

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LET US TAKE THE MAIN PROBLEM - THE STATE OF AFFAIRS WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS LIMITATION AGREEMENT. IN MY PREVIOUS LETTERS I HAVE ALREADY NOTED THAT AFTER AGREEMENT OF PRINCIPLE ON A NUMBER OF MAJOR ISSUES WAS ACHIEVED DURING THE MEETINGS WITH YOU OF THE USSR MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS LAST SEPTEMBER, FROM THE US SIDE, NOTWITHSTANDING THE READINESS WE SHOWED TO SEEK MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS TO OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS, THERE FOLLOWED NO EQUIVALENT STEPS TOWARDS THE SOVIET POSITION.

MOREOVER, JUDGING BY YOUR LETTER, NOW AN ATTEMPT IS MADE TO INTRODUCE INTO THE PREPARATION OF THE AGREEMENT, AS A NEW FACTOR, REFERENCES TO THE DOMESTIC OPPOSITION IN THE US, FOR THE SATISFACTION OF WHICH WE ARE CALLED UPON TO MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS. AND AMONG UNSOLVED ISSUES SUCH QUESTIONS ARE AGAIN MENTIONED (AS THE BACKFIRE, FOR EXAMPLE) WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN CLOSED LONG AGO. SUCH APPROACH IS IN NO WAY HELPFUL. IT IS EASY TO IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE SOVIET SIDE ACTED IN A SIMILAR MANNER.

WE, OF COURSE, ARE PREPARED TO CONTINUE TO SEEK MUTUALLY

ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS TO OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS. WE ARE ALSO  
READY TO CONTRIBUTE - TO THE EXTENT IT DEPENDS ON US - TO  
CREATING A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE IN THE US AROUND THE FUTURE  
AGREEMENT. BUT SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE AGREEMENT, IN  
WHICH OBJECTIVELY BOTH OUR COUNTRIES ARE EQUALLY INTERESTED  
REQUIRES THAT THE US SIDE ALSO MAKE ITS PART OF THE ROAD.  
AND, OF COURSE, OUR EFFORTS IN FAVOR OF THE APPROVAL OF THE  
AGREEMENT IN THE US CAN BE NO MEANS BE REGARDED AS A SUB-  
STITUTE FOR EFFORTS IN THE SAID DIRECTION BY THE ADMINI-  
SECRET

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STRATION ITSELF WHICH, NATURALLY, IS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR  
THAT.

FRANKLY SPEAKING, I ALSO EXPECTED A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE REPLY  
TO THE LETTER I HAD SENT TO YOU SPECIFICALLY ON THE QUES-  
TION OF NEUTRON WEAPONS. I SHALL NOT REPEAT NOW OUR STATED  
ASSESSMENT OF THIS NEW VARIETY OF WEAPONS OF MASS ANNIHILA-  
TION. I WISH, HOWEVER, TO STRESS AGAIN ONE ASPECT OF PRIN-  
CIPLE. IF WE TAKE PURELY MILITARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THAT  
WEAPON, TO WHICH THE MATTER IS ACTUALLY REDUCED IN YOUR  
LETTER, EVEN THEN SUCH AN APPROACH CLEARLY SHOWS ITS  
PERNICIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECU-  
RITY. IN FACT, THE PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THAT  
WEAPON WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO REDUCING THE SO-CALLED  
NUCLEAR THRESHOLD, TO A TEMPTATION TO USE IT AT EARLIER  
STAGES OF A CONFLICT AND, CONSEQUENTLY, TO INCREASING THE  
RISK OF A NUCLEAR WAR. IS THIS ALONE NOT SUFFICIENT TO  
CAUSE CONCERN THAT PROMPTED THE PROPOSAL I PUT FORWARD?  
AND IT IS NOT THE MATTER OF PROPAGANDA HERE AT ALL.

WE CONFIRM OUR PROPOSAL TO AGREE ON A MUTUAL REFUSAL TO  
PRODUCE NEUTRON WEAPONS AND WE WOULD LIKE TO HOPE THAT  
THIS PROPOSAL WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE US SIDE WITH DUE  
ATTENTION, IMPARTIALLY AND WITHOUT ATTEMPTS TO LINK IT  
WITH OTHER QUESTIONS.

A FEW WORDS CONCERNING OTHER ISSUES OF DISAMAMENT WHICH  
ARE THE SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. IN  
ADDITION TO THE AGREEMENT ON STRATEGIC ARMAMENTS WHICH IS  
UNDER PREPARATION, THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PRACTICAL RESULTS AT  
THESE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD IN ITSELF MEAN A STEP FORWARD  
TOWARDS RESTRAINING THE ARMS RACE. THIS HAS BEEN RECOG-  
NIZED MORE THAN ONCE ALSO BY THE US SIDE. THE MORE  
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UNJUSTIFIED ARE ITS ATTEMPTS LATELY TO LINK IN SOME WAY OR  
OTHER THE SOLUTION OF THESE QUESTIONS WITH THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE SITUATION IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD. ARTIFICIAL  
LINKAGE OF SUCH KIND HAS NEVER BROUGHT ABOUT ANYTHING GOOD

IN THE PAST, NOR WILL IT BE OF ANY BENEFIT NOW. THERE MAY BE ONLY ONE RESULT - COMPLICATION, DELAY IN NEGOTIATIONS.

BUT IS THIS WHAT OUR COUNTRIES SHOULD STRIVE FOR?

NO LESS PUZZLING IS THE ATTEMPT TO REPRESENT THE SOVIET UNION AS ALLEGEDLY TRYING TO GET SOME ADVANTAGES FROM THE CONFLICT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, AND EVEN TO SPEAK OF A POSSIBILITY OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR SOVIET-US RELATIONS. WE HAVE ALREADY ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION BROUGHT TO YOUR PERSONAL ATTENTION, MR. PRESIDENT, AS WELL AS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE US SECRETARY OF STATE, THAT OUR POLICY IN THE QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT PURSUES THE SOLE PURPOSE OF RESTORING JUSTICE AND PEACE IN THAT REGION. IT IS PRECISELY FOR THAT REASON ONLY THAT WE ARE HELPING ETHIOPIA AS A VICTIM OF AGGRESSION ON THE PART OF SOMALIA. IF SOMALIA WITHDRAWS ITS TROOPS FROM ETHIOPIA - AND THE SOONER OUTSIDE SUPPORT OF SOMALI AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS IS DISCONTINUED THE EARLIER SUCH WITHDRAWAL WOULD OCCUR - THEN THE CAUSE OF THE CONFLICT WOULD CEASE TO EXIST.

A SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST UNDOUBTEDLY REMAINS AN IMPORTANT QUESTION URGENTLY REQUIRING MUTUAL EFFORTS OF OUR COUNTRIES. IN YOUR LETTER YOU WOULD SEEM TO REPROACH US FOR THE FACT THAT ACTIONS OF THE USSR AND THE US GO IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. AND THIS IS SAID DESPITE THE FACT THAT IT IS THE UNITED STATES AND NOT THE SOVIET UNION THAT HAS DEPARTED FROM THE STATEMENT JOINTLY ADOPTED ON OCTOBER 1, 1977, HAS EMBARKED UPON THE PATH OF ENCOURAGING SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. CAN THIS BE REGARDED AS AN OBJECTIVE APPROACH TO THE ISSUE? OF SECRET

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COURSE, NOT.

WHATEVER IS SAID IN AN ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY THOSE SEPARATE ACTIONS IT IS PERFECTLY OBVIOUS THAT THE PRESENT COURSE OF EVENTS SERIOUSLY COMPLICATES THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A GENUINE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. EVEN IF THE NEGOTIATIONS OF EGYPT WITH ISRAEL DEAL NOT ONLY WITH WORKING OUT A SEPARATE AGREEMENT ON SINAI BUT ALSO WITH SOME GENERAL "PRINCIPLES OF A SETTLEMENT" THIS DOES NOT IN ANY WAY CHANGE THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MATTER. BESIDES, IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT OTHER ARAB SIDES IN THE CONFLICT ON WHOSE BEHALF SADAT IS TRYING TO ACT NOT ONLY HAVE NOT AUTHORIZED HIM TO DO SO BUT CLEARLY STATE THAT THEY WILL NOT AGREE TO ANY ARRANGEMENTS WORKED OUT WITHOUT THEIR PARTICIPATION.

FOR OUR PART, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT A WAY OUT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IS TO BE SOUGHT ON THE ROAD OF RETURNING TO A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE FRAME-

WORK OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL  
PARTIES CONCERNED, THAT IS ON THE ROAD AGREED UPON BETWEEN  
US LAST FALL.

I HAVE CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO ADDRESS THE QUESTIONS  
RAISED BY YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, NOT FOR THE SAKE OF POLEMICS,  
OF COURSE. I HAVE DONE THIS BECAUSE, IN OUR OPINION, THE  
NECESSITY OF PRACTICAL CONSTRUCTIVE MEASURES IN SOVIET-US  
RELATIONS IS BECOMING EVER MORE URGENT, AND I WOULD LIKE  
TO HOPE THAT THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN US ON THE MOST  
PRESSING ISSUES OF THESE RELATIONS WILL HELP TO MAKE STEPS  
IN RIGHT DIRECTION.

SINCERELY,

L.BREZHNEV

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FEBRUARY 27, 1978

END TEXT. VANCE

SECRET

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## Message Attributes

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